

Chair Report on ISP Meeting 40

7th of September 2021

The third ISP meeting for 2021 was conducted by Zoom on the 7th of September for 3 hours. Members attending were John Rolfe (Chair), Jenny Stauber, Eva Abel, Jane Waterhouse, Roger Chong, Rob Coles, Erin Bohensky (1 hour) and Mac Hansler (Science team). A number of agenda items were dealt with.

Progress towards 2021 report card

- Most project reports have been submitted and are progressing through the review process with the ISP.
- The PCIMP data is expected within the next two weeks.
- Members noted that the small sample numbers for the Fish Health Assessment Index, and to a lesser extent Mud crabs, limited the confidence that can be placed on those assessments.
- Coral health continues to score at very low levels.

Draft 2021 Litter indicator

- The ISP reviewed the draft indicator for Marine Debris that has been developed.
- This indicator has been based on data from the Australian Marine Debris Initiative database, which includes standardized clean up data from Tangaroa Blue, and methodology developed by Tegan Whitehead (Dry Tropics) and Bill Venables (CSIRO). This is the first time this indicator has been developed for GHHP. The ISP noted that the methodology had already been approved through the ISP for the Great Barrier Reef, and that the scoring ranges used were different to the normal grade assessments applied by GHHP.
- The ISP recommended the litter indicator to the MC, with the following notes:
 - The scoring thresholds in the litter metric be kept, (even though they vary from GHHP) so as to maintain some limited comparability with the other report cards. However, the nomenclature related to scores should range from 'very high pressure' to 'slight pressure' and not include a reference to A to E scoring. This is to reduce confusion between the different grading system used for the litter indicator as compared to the standard GHHP grading system.
 - The format for reporting the litter metric used in other report cards be adopted.
 - Scores are reported at the site level, rather than being aggregated to the whole of harbour, as there are large variations between sites

- Report litter indicator scores separately to other components in the report card. There may be options to include litter scores in a future stewardship component of the report card, but there is value in waiting to see how other report cards treat this.

Review of Social and Sense of Place indicators

There has been substantial work occurring over the past year to develop more consistent indicators for Human Dimensions reporting across the five GBR report cards, including the potential development of a common data collection process through CSIRO. Options to revise the GHHP Social and Sense of Place indicators and to align with measures that might be common across the other report cards were considered. The ISP agreed on the following outcomes:

- That Social and Sense of Place indicators should be assessed for the 2021-22 report card instead of Economic, to maximise compatibility with the other report cards.
- That the number of measures be condensed to simplify the assessment and the data collection while still maintaining consistency with previous assessments.
- That additional questions from the CSIRO-led survey may be added to enable some comparison with the other report card data sets.
- That GHHP continues to use the CATI survey as the main data collection format rather than moving to the online platform with Facebook advertising that CSIRO proposes to use.

Planning for adverse events

The ISP considered the priorities for actions and additional monitoring in the case of a future negative adverse event in Gladstone Harbour. The broad types of events considered were Major Floods, Cyclones, Fish Kills and Spill events. It was noted that any event would have very specific impacts, so responses would need to be tailored to the specific event characteristics. Two types of responses were identified:

- Changing the schedule of planned monitoring events to bring forward the most relevant assessment items, and
- Performing additional monitoring, potentially to assess specific impacts in parts of the harbour.

The ISP developed a broad priority list of assessments for each type of event, noting that monitoring will need to be tailored for the circumstances of each event.

- The indicators most sensitive to adverse events, particularly in the short term, are expected to be water quality, fish and mud crabs.
- The CONNIE model will be important to predict which areas of the harbour will be most impacted by floods or spills so that sampling can be targeted.
- Depending on the event, assessment may need to be focused on a sub-set of measures or additional measures such as pathogens and biomarkers.
- Community reporting of fish data may be useful to generate assessments of fish condition.
- The ISP should be involved immediately after an adverse event to plan and recommend targeted monitoring and assessment strategies.

Proposed changes in Visual Fish Health

The ISP considered the changes recommended by InfoFish to the nomenclature and scoring of visual fish health indicators. The ISP supported recommendations to:

- Rename the 'Visual Fish Assessment' measure with 'Visual Fish Condition' (this will complement the other measure of 'Fish Body Condition')
- Rename the 'Visual Fish Condition' sub-indicator with 'Fish Condition'
- Use 95% confidence intervals to calculate the historic minimum and maximum values for the Relative Condition Factor instead of the lowest and highest historic values.

The ISP did not support a recommendation to remove eyes, parasites and deformities from the Visual Fish Assessment on the basis that:

- It was important to maintain conformity with previous assessments
- Relying on skin and fin measures may place too much emphasis on potential injury from recreational anglers (if fish are mishandled) rather than underlying health factors.

Including staggered indicators in the Report Card

The ISP considered how to report indicators that are not assessed in any one year. The current system where indicators are still reported with explanation that the results have been carried over from previous years is the most practical, as large variations in results could occur if indicators are dropped from the assessment.

However there is a danger that including staggered indicators is not appropriate for indicators that are not stable over time. Currently it is only the more stable indicators that are being staggered.

It is recommended that the results of staggered indicators continue to be included in the report card, except for the most sensitive indicators. From 2022, it is not recommended that the Fish Health Assessment Index be included, as this will no longer be monitored. Instead, only the Fish Condition sub-indicator will be used to indicate Fish Health.

Next Meeting

The ISP meeting is scheduled as a face-to-face meeting in Gladstone on the 16th of November, 2021.